

Zionism

by Jodey Bateman

Editor's Preface: This is easily among the best and most concise accounts concerning the real history of "Israel" and Zionism. I came across this in a hunt for non-propaganda historical material on this subject, and Bateman here has given us a small gold mine.

Understanding of this subject is absolutely vital to us. Most Christians in the United States (by far the most politically powerful force therein) believe that the nation we call "Israel" is the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. What they do not know, is that the Zionist movement, which it is founded upon, *is not at all what they think*.

Zionism has nothing to do with Biblical Hebrews or Israelites. Zionism is a construct of Khazar tribes of central Asia, *who have practically no connection to Biblical Israel at all.* Yet they completely control "Israel" today. Even the Khazar religion, which is mistakenly called "Judaism", is not the religion of the Biblical Israelites. Khazar religion is based upon Babylonian Talmudism – a radically supremacist and egoistic religion, which overturns through reinterpretation most of the tenets of the Bible.

Christians in the US have been methodically fooled into supporting Zionism at whatever the cost - in spite of these facts. This has allowed Zionist Talmudic Khazars to manipulate Britain and the United States into conducting numerous wars over the last 100 years, *including World War 1 and World War 2.* At each step, the Khazars have obtained colossal benefit from the wreckage of these wars, both politically and financially. The modern Israel has, in a real sense, been the most overt manifestation of these gains. Zionists first received the payment in the form of the *land* of Palestine from the British, in return for the Rothschilds (Zionist backers) successfully drawing the US into World War 1 in defense of the British. Then, Zionists agitated on *both* sides of World War 2 (Axis and Allies), to secure the *Khazar population* of the land of Palestine, through the secret Zionist Transfer Agreement with the Nazi government of Germany.

Incredibly, Talmudic Khazar Zionists are seeking still more gains in 2012, by agitating and propagandizing for more wars against their various new Middle Eastern enemies, using the Christians of the US as fodder. This tragically includes the use of numerous "false-flag" attacks perpetrated by the Israeli Mossad – particularly against the US! Ironically (especially for US Christians), these enemies of the Khazar Zionists include Christians, Hebrews and Israelites of the Middle East – the very people the Christians mistakenly believe they are supporting!

The ultimate goal appears to be Khazar / Rothschild / Zionist conquest of the bulk of the Middle East – and thereby economic dominance of the world.

Introductory Note

In this essay I have used the word Labor Party for all the political groups that came out of what was the socialist Zionist military organization Haganah up until Israeli independence in 1948.

Actually in the fifties there was an often confusing series of splits and reunifications among socialist Zionist parties. But all of these groups came out of the Haganah. They usually worked together and finally unified as the Labor Party.

Also, I have used the name Likud for a group of right-wing Zionist organizations that all had their origin in the "revisionist" Zionist military force called the Irgun, which existed before Israeli independence. These organizations did not formally unite into the Likud Party until the early 1970's.

In the same way I used the term Hamas before it was actually used. Hamas even now is an umbrella for a group of fundamentalist Muslim organizations which were opposed to the secular Palestinian movement almost as much as they were to Zionism. However it is true that Israeli intelligence gave financial support to some groups which would later become Hamas. This caused considerable embarrassment to some Hamas leaders when the Israeli government publicly admitted that it had given this support to split the Palestinian movement.

Let us set the stage.

In the 1890's, the Turkish Empire - also known as the Ottoman Empire - was slowly dying. But it still included not only what is now Turkey, but also Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel/Palestine, along with a strip along the west coast of what is now Saudi Arabia - a strip which included the Muslim holy city of Mecca - and also the northern part of what is now Yemen.

Outside of Turkey itself, millions of Arabic speaking people under Turkish rule were becoming increasingly restless. Leaders from the intellectual classes were calling for an independent "Arab Nation".

At this time, less than five percent of the inhabitants of what is now Israel/Palestine considered themselves Jews, although most of the Arabic speaking Christians and Muslims of the area had some ancestors who were part of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Though most Palestinians had ancestry that would be considered "Jewish", that was lost to their historical memory. Younger, better educated Palestinians were joining the new Arab nationalism to shake off Turkish control.

The old walled city of Jerusalem, which had less than 20,000 people at this time, had been over half Jewish since the 1840's, when railroads and steamships made it easier for people to travel from Europe to the Middle East. Most of these were deeply religious Jews from eastern Europe who set up religious schools in Jerusalem and lived largely on charity from synagogues in Europe.

At the eastern end of Europe was the Russian Empire where half the Jews in the world lived. In 1881 the Russian Czar, Alexander II, was assassinated by revolutionaries. Since many revolutionary leaders in Russia were Jews, the new Czar, Alexander III, decided to encourage the old feelings of hostility the Russian common people felt toward Jews, hoping that this hostility would turn Russian workers and peasants against the revolutionary movement.

The Russian government deliberately stirred up riots, called pogroms, where mobs of ordinary Russians were permitted - even encouraged to raid Jewish neighborhoods, kill Jews and loot their homes and stores.

The hope was that one third of the Jews would be killed, one third would convert to Eastern Orthodox Christianity (the official religion of the empire), and one third would leave Russia. Between 1890 and 1910 over a million Jews migrated from the Russian Empire to the United States, but very few went to Israel/Palestine besides the few thousand religious Jews already mentioned.

While most Jews in the Russian Empire were poor, at the western end of Europe was France, the most democratic country in Europe, where most of the relatively small Jewish community were well to do and well educated and had full citizenship rights.

In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish colonel in the French army, was tried and imprisoned on charges of being a spy for Germany. (If this seems strange, remember that Adolf Hitler was only five years old at the time.)

Many of the most prominent intellectuals in France protested that Dreyfus was innocent and called for his release. In return, the Catholic Church drummed up a campaign of hostility against Dreyfus. The Catholic Church hoped to use the Dreyfus issue to get back the privileges it had lost under the democratic French government. The Church also hoped to turn French workers back to Catholicism and away from the Socialist Party whose leader, Jean Jaures, had called for the release of Dreyfus.

At this time an Austrian Jew named Theodor Herzl was living in France. He saw the officially sponsored riots against the Jews in Russia, and the Dreyfus case in France, as part of an international campaign that could destroy all Jews. In 1896 Herzl wrote The Jewish State in which he said that Jews had to have a land and a government of their own, a space which they controlled, where Jews could flee to escape persecution.

Herzl was willing to accept the possibility that many of the stereotypes that anti Jewish propagandists claimed about Jews might be true. But he said that these stereotyped characteristics could never be corrected without the pride of national independence and an educational system designed by Jews who knew their own people well and that they could eradicate these characteristics.

Herzl was not a religious Jew. To him it was not necessary that his Jewish State should be in the ancient land of Israel. At one point he seriously considered setting up his Jewish State in the British colony of Uganda in Africa. He was not very clear about what should happen to the

native people of Uganda. For that matter, he thought that if the Jewish State was set up in what is now Israel/Palestine, the Palestinians would be given railroad tickets out of the area except for a minority who might be kept around to rid the area of poisonous snakes for the convenience of the Jewish settlers.

As racist as these ideas seem now, there was nothing specifically Jewish about them. Herzl was a contemporary of other promoters of colonialist schemes such as the British Cecil Rhodes, who set up white settlements in his Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe) and took away the tribal lands of tens of thousands of African natives for his white settlers. The American, Daniel Payne, campaigned to overthrow the tribal governments of Indian Territory and take away their tribal lands to create his state of Oklahoma. Herzl was typical of many Europeans and Americans of his time who could not conceive of people outside their cultural sphere as having rights.

In 1897, Herzl called the World Jewish Congress with delegates from all over Europe and America. This congress took place in Basel, Switzerland, and out of it the Zionist movement was set up. The name Zionist comes from Zion, the name of the ridge on which the old city of Jerusalem was built.

At first most Jews ignored or opposed Zionism. Religious Jews opposed the idea of any Jewish state that was not set up by a divinely appointed king called the Messiah. Many non religious Jews supported the socialist movement in which they hoped, together with non-Jewish workers, to create a more just society in the countries where they already lived. In practice many Jews tried to better their lives immediately by moving to the United States, where Jews had full legal rights and living conditions might be hard for the poor, but they were better than the lives of most Jews in the Russian Empire.

After the World Jewish Congress in Basel, Switzerland, Theodor Herzl, who had inspired it, wrote in his diary, "In Basel I established a Jewish State. If I were to say that aloud today, universal laughter would be the response. Maybe in five years, certainly in 50, everybody will recognize it."

Herzl wrote those words in 1897. In 1948, 51 years later, the state of Israel was established.

But between 1897 and the future was a long, difficult road. Herzl had too few followers to even dream of conquering the ancient land of Israel/Palestine from the Turkish Empire. Instead, he negotiated with the central Turkish government to make sure that its notoriously corrupt and capricious local officials would not harm the early Zionist communities that were being set up.

What sort of people were the settlers who formed the first Zionist Communities? Their characteristics would set the tone of the future Israeli society for many years. They were young, brave and almost all of them were indifferent or hostile to the Jewish religion. They were deeply inspired by the ideals of the early socialist movement - democracy, egalitarianism and collectivism.

However, there was one important difference. The early socialist movement - including most of its Jewish supporters - believed that solidarity of all workers was more important than national distinctions. Yet Jewish workers were scattered in many countries and were a majority in none. If they gave up the Jewish religion as most Jewish socialists and most Zionists did, how were Jews to remain a distinct people? The Jewish religion traditionally forbade intermarriage with non Jews and prescribed distinctive dress and dietary rules that set Jews apart. If Jews gave up these things in countries where they were a minority, how long would it be before Jews lost their identity as a separate people?

This question received a powerful symbol during the unsuccessful Russian Revolution of 1905, the year Theodore Herzl died. One of the most important leaders of this failed revolution was the Jewish socialist Leon Trotsky who was married to Natalia Sedova, a non-Jewish Russian woman.

To most of the young adventurers who set up Zionist settlements, the preservation of Jewish identity was at least as important as their socialist values. They did not want to incorporate Palestinian Christians and Muslims into the new society they were trying to build. The Zionist groups bought land in Palestine from big Arab landowners who lived in the city of Beirut in what is now Lebanon. Then the Zionists evicted the Palestinian tenant farmers who had lived on the land. The Zionist pioneers set up kibbutzim - communal farms - on the land from which the Palestinians had been evicted. These communal farms were models of socialist democracy, but Palestinians were not allowed to become members. Palestinians were not allowed to join Histadrut, the confederation of Zionists labor unions.

Zionists who went to international socialist conferences felt uncomfortable when they joined their fellow socialists in protesting discrimination against Jews in Europe while Zionists were discriminating against Palestinians.

Some Zionists, such as the youth group Hashomer Hatzair proposed "binationalism" - that is, Jews and Palestinians would create, not a Jewish state or an Arab state, but a state of two nationalities, both of them with equal rights.

But the binationalists were not the Zionists who received the funding. The money for Zionism came from Jewish capitalist banking firms, such as the Rothschilds - which were despised by Jewish socialists as much as by any non Jew. Financial support went to Zionist groups who held the position of ultimate displacement of Arabic speaking Christians and Muslims from Israel/Palestine.

Then World War I began in 1914. The Turkish Empire was an ally of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire against Britain, France and Russia, who were called the Allies. The Allies promised the Arabic speaking subject peoples of the Turkish Empire that if they would rise up against their Turkish rulers, they would be allowed to set up a united, independent "Arab Nation".

In 1916 the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which said that Britain supported a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine, but this was a "national home",

not a "Jewish State" as Theodor Herzl had proposed. The Balfour Declaration said that the Jewish "national home" would not be set up to prejudice in any way the rights of the people already living in Palestine. In other words, the Palestinian Christians and Muslims, who were still 93% of the people living in the area, would not have to give up their land or leave their homes for the sake of the Jewish "national home".

In 1917 British troops captured Jerusalem and soon the Allies were in control of the Arabic speaking regions of the Turkish Empire. Instead of the united "Arab Nation", Syria and Lebanon became French colonies. Iraq and Kuwait became British colonies. Palestine and Transjordan (now Jordan) became British "mandates" where British control was supposed to last until 1948. Both Arab nationalists and Zionists felt betrayed.

The British, in the policy of divide and rule, which they had used in so many of their colonies, played Jews and Palestinians against one another. Especially the British tried to discourage "binationalism", the unity of Jews and Palestinians.

In 1917, the year the British took Jerusalem, the Russian Revolution set up a new power, the Soviet Union, which was seen as a tremendous threat by the capitalist classes of western Europe. A new group of movements called Fascist arose, taking advantage of the discontent caused by the hardships after World War I. Fascist movements used patriotism and ethnic hostility to organize masses of people against revolution. Although Fascists often talked against capitalism, actually they organized their followers to fight against labor unions, socialist parties and the new pro Soviet Communist parties. Capitalists often secretly funded fascist movements.

The Jewish Fascist writer Vladimir Jabotinsky set up what he called "Zionist-revisionism". This was Zionism without the socialist values, which were so much a part of early Zionism. While the earlier Zionists - who were still the majority of Zionists - set up the ultra collectivist kibbutzim (communal farms) the Zionist-revisionists preferred the moshavim, co-ops composed of individually operated farms.

Although Jabotinsky, the Zionist-revisionist founder, did not practice the Jewish religion, he made an appeal to religious Jews who felt excluded by the mainstream Zionist movement. The earlier Zionists had sometimes had pains of conscience about their discrimination against the Palestinians. But the Zionist-revisionists stood for "transference" - expulsion of the Palestinians without a qualm.

In the same way, while earlier Arab nationalist movements had admired western democracy and occasionally had socialist sympathies, after World War I there were new nationalist movements, anti-British and anti-French because these democracies had betrayed the Arabs. Thus these new Arab nationalists admired the new Fascist dictatorships in Germany and Italy.

Among the Palestinians a Fascist leader became influential after Adolf Hitler set up a Fascist dictatorship in Germany and German Jews began to flee to Palestine to escape persecution (The strict American immigration quotas kept these Jews out of the United States.)

The Palestinian Fascist leader was Haj Hussein Al Ameini, the Grand Mufti (Muslim religious authority) of Jerusalem. The Grand Mufti openly admired Hitler's Nazi Germany. In what must have been very ironic to Jews, the Grand Mufti turned the annual Muslim pilgrimages to the supposed tomb of Moses into rallies against Zionists and Jews in general.

So among both Zionists and Palestinians there was a rise of movements of uncompromising hatred against each other.

The Grand Mufti actually visited Germany and had a friendly visit with Hitler. The Grand Mufti's bitter enemies, the Zionist-revisionists could not go nearly that far.

However a group of prominent Zionist-revisionists, including Yitzhak Shamir, who later became prime minister of Israel, wrote a letter to Hitler. In this letter they said there was no need for any quarrel between the Zionists-revisionists and the nazis because the Zionists-revisionists merely wished to set up a "nationalist and totalitarian state" for the Jewish people, just as Hitler was setting up a nationalist and totalitarian state for the Germans. Hitler refused to acknowledge the letter.

The two major varieties of Zionists set up military forces to defend themselves against the Palestinians and also against the British, who still ruled Palestine and played the role of defending "law and order" against "extremists on both sides."

The socialist oriented mainstream Zionists, who were still the great majority, set up a force called the Haganah. Their rivals, the Fascist Zionist-revisionists had a military force called the Irgun. During World War II, the Haganah and some of the Irgun fought on the side of the Allies in Europe against Germany. However, much of the Irgun acted as if the British authorities in Palestine were as bad an enemy as Germany. (In the same way, the Arab Nationalists in Palestine treated the British authorities as their enemy more than Germany - if they even thought of Germany as an enemy).

After World War II, tensions were greatly increased when over 100,000 Jewish survivors of the Nazi Holocaust entered or attempted to enter Palestine. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Through the secret Transfer Agreement with the Nazi government, the Zionists had already begun moving Europe's Khazar population to Palestine. Jews found to be actual Hebrews were given priority and airlifted to Hebron, which the Nazi's believed was a fulfillment of the Biblical prophecy of Obadiah. Allied bombing and torpedoing of Nazi ships stopped the transfers by ship, because that had become unsafe. (Curiously, the first major immigration of Khazar Jews into Palestine was on ships bearing a swastika flag.) Therefore, in accordance with Theodore Hertzl's wishes, the alternate plan arrived at in the Wannsee conference was to relocate as many Khazar Jews as possible to land gained from Russia by war first, and then to eventually relocate the "best" of these to Palestine. Meanwhile, the Nazis began training the Irgun and Haganah in Italy, to assist in a hoped-for Nazi co-conquest of the Middle East.] Once more the strict American immigration laws kept many Holocaust survivors out of the USA. Zionists of all sorts would not join the lobbying for these Holocaust survivors to enter the USA, where many of them had relatives. The Zionists wanted these people to go to Palestine to build up the Zionist settlements there.

The socialist oriented Haganah and the Zionist-revisionist Irgun fought against the Palestinians, the British and one another. Menachem Begin of the Irgun planted a bomb in British administration headquarters in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which killed not only British officials but also several Jewish hotel guests.

In 1948 the British mandate to rule Palestine would run out. The United Nations proposed a partition of Palestine into Zionist dominated and Arab dominated areas with Jerusalem as a neutral zone. Negotiations broke down because the Palestinians refused to accept the partition map, which left many Palestinians, and some of the best agricultural land, in the Zionist controlled areas.

War broke out early 1948. The armies of Jordan, Egypt and Iraq (all three of which had been British puppet governments) poured into Palestine along with the armies of Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. The gross misconduct of the war by the Arab states was a disaster - especially for the Palestinian people. When Palestinian peasants begged for weapons to protect their villages from the Zionist forces, the Arab states armies refused to give them any. The Arab states were afraid that after the war the Palestinian peasants would use these weapons to seize land from the big landowners.

The Irgun (Zionist-revisionist) forces massacred over 200 people in the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin. Thousands of Palestinians fled from their villages. The socialist oriented Haganah disclaimed any responsibility for the Irgun atrocity at Deir Yassin, but the Haganah took advantage of it to occupy the deserted Palestinian villages and make them all Jewish. But some Palestinians remained in the Zionist controlled areas.

During the war a communist coup took over Czechoslovakia. The Czech communists made large amounts of weapons from the big Czech Skoda arms factory available to the Soviet Union, which turned these weapons over to the Haganah. The Irgun was hostile to the Soviet union. Many Irgun members had gone through the experience, not of the Nazi Holocaust, but of Soviet labor camps.

At one point when the Irgun tried to import its own shipload of weapons, a Haganah artillery unit commanded by David Ben-Gurion (later, prime minister of Israel) fired upon the Irgun ship and blasted it out of the water with great loss of life before it could reach land.

When a ceasefire was finally proclaimed, the Palestinians retained control only of the rugged, difficult range of hills that ran from north to south through central Palestine and included the old walled city of Jerusalem with all its sacred shrines. The new modern city of Jerusalem was in Zionist hands. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians spent the rest of their lives in crowded, shabby refugee camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon living on charity from the United Nations - over half of them were unemployed. And their children often grew up and had children of their own in these camps. The hilly areas that the Palestinians had been able to keep were put under the authority of Jordan.

Meanwhile the Zionists constituted themselves as the State of Israel. While the United States was the first country to recognize Israel, the Soviet Union was the country which put

forward the resolution for Israel to be given a seat in the United Nations. This began a temporary period of friendship between the Soviet Union and Israel. During this period, the government of Israel was formed by the socialist oriented Haganah while Menachem Begin, the leader of the Zionist-revisionist Irgun was called a "terrorist" by the Haganah leaders.

The People around the Haganah became the Labor Party and those around the Irgun became the Likud Party. There were some small religious parties and one small group, Neturei Karta (Guardians of the City) which refused to accept the State of Israel because it had not been set up by the Messiah. Many Neturei Karta members were from families who had lived in Jerusalem under Turkish rule since before the Zionist movement was founded. Neturei Karta members paid their taxes to Jordan, not Israel.

The descendants of the early Zionist settlers and the refugees from the Holocaust made up too small a population to defend Israel from the hostile Arab states. The Soviet Union would not allow its Jews to move to Israel. The life of Jews in the United States was (after World War II) too comfortable for any of them to want to move to Israel. Not enough Jews were left in most of Europe after the Holocaust to provide much population for Israel.

So, Israel had to make its major recruitment appeal to Middle Eastern Jews who had been mostly indifferent to Zionism before World War II. After the Israeli-Arab war of 1948, there was so much hostility to Jews in the Arab States that many Jews from those countries were glad to move to Israel. Where there was not so much hostility, Israeli intelligence helped things along by dynamiting a synagogue in Iraq and blaming it on Arab nationalists so that the Iraqi Jews would be panicked into moving to Israel. Soon over half the population of Israel were Middle Eastern Jews.

Between these Jews and the European Jews who had set up Israel existed what is called the "communal gap". Middle Eastern Jews tended (and still tend) to be poorer and less educated than European Jews. When the Middle Eastern Jews arrived in Israel, most of them spoke Arabic as their native language. They saw that the Palestinians who remained in Israel were on the bottom of society.

The Middle Eastern Jews did not want to be identified with Palestinians. They were like poor whites in the Southern USA who did not want to be identified with blacks, but clung to what small privileges that they had as whites. In the same way the Middle Eastern Jews clung to whatever special privileges that Israel granted them as Jews. Many of them began to vote for the Zionist-revisionist Likud Party because they saw it as tougher on Palestinians, and Arabs in general, than the Labor Party. Voting for Likud was a way that Middle Eastern Jews could show that they were not Arabs. In spite of Likud's Middle Eastern Jewish voting base, Likud had continued, like the Labor Party, to be run by European Jews.

The voting base of the Likud Party was among Middle Eastern Jews. But so many Middle Eastern Jews voted for the Labor Party that together with the great voting majorities Labor got among European Jews, the Labor Party ran Israel for the first 25 years of its existence. Likud was seen as a crank fringe group.

Into the early Fifties Israel had friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Israeli intelligence shared information with Soviet intelligence - although not to the same extent that Israeli intelligence would later share information with the CIA.

Much of Israeli society maintained a negative attitude towards the Jewish religion into the Fifties. Many Israeli teachers gave heavy homework assignments over the weekend so schoolchildren would have to break the Sabbath to keep their grades up. When Middle Eastern Jews immigrated to Israel often the parents sent their children to Israel ahead of them. Often the Labor government deliberately kept these children separated from their parents for as long as possible after the parents arrived in Israel. This was so the children would not be infected with "backward" ideas such as the Jewish religion or sympathy for the Likud Party. Some of these children did not see their parents again until they were adults and the Likud Party got much favorable publicity from exposing these enforced separations.

Soviet-Israeli friendship continued as long as the Arab states were dominated by rulers who had been puppets or close allies of British and French colonialism.

In the USA, except for Jews, the great majority of Americans were indifferent to Israel. Palestinian Christians spoke to friendly audiences in evangelical Protestant churches about the hardships they had endured from being displaced by Israel.

Things began to change in 1952 when Farouk, the British puppet king of Egypt, the most populous Arabic-speaking country, was overthrown. A group of young army officers, disgusted by the corruption and mismanagement of the Egyptian army during the 1948 war with Israel, took over Egypt. Their leader was a 34 year old colonel, Gamal Abdel Nasser, who became president of Egypt for 18 years until his death in 1970.

Nasser allowed Algerian nationalists to come to Egypt and set up headquarters in Cairo for a movement to make Algeria independent from France. In 1956 he nationalized the Suez Canal, a major international waterway, which had belonged to Britain.

In October, 1956, Britain, France and Israel attacked Egypt. The Soviet Union threatened these three countries, and by implication the United States, unless they stopped their invasion of Egypt. The USA managed to obtain a ceasefire. By the end of this brief war the Egyptian military had sunk ships in the Suez Canal, which made it impossible to navigate for several years. Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula to the east of the Suez Canal for a while.

The next year, 1957, President Nasser of Egypt requested the USA to sell him weapons. The USA refused on the grounds that he might use these weapons against Israel. So Nasser bought weapons from the Soviet Union. In turn the USA withdrew financial aid from the huge Aswan High Dam which Egypt was building to irrigate large areas of desert land and provide desperately needed electricity for industrialization. So Nasser got Soviet financing and Soviet technicians to help build the Aswan High Dam.

The same year Faisal, the British puppet king of Iraq, was assassinated and Iraq was taken over by pro-Soviet army officers. The USA sent Marines to Lebanon to make sure that a

coup sympathetic to Nasser would not succeed there. Another month of crisis followed with the Soviet Union threatening war.

For the next 13 years Nasser's eloquent speeches on radio were popular with millions of people across the Middle East. And his message was socialist, pro-Soviet, indifferent to Islam - although very anti-Israel. To oppose Nasser the intelligence services of Israel, Saudi Arabia and the USA subsidized Muslim fundamentalist groups which often carried out terrorist operations against Nasser's government.

Now the Soviet Union was committed to support of Egypt and opposition to Israel. So Israel turned to its most logical ally, the USA. This "special relationship" began to flower after John F. Kennedy became president. Until his presidency, the diplomatic and national security bureaucracies had been overwhelmingly white Protestant, at least on their upper levels. In Kennedy's presidency, members of the Jewish community such as Walt Whitman Rostow began to rise to higher positions in the national security establishment.

A best-selling novel, Exodus by Leon Uris, which glorified Zionist history, was made into a hit movie, which brought much goodwill to Israel in the USA. The Israeli Labor Party developed many links to the American liberal Democrats. In Israel itself the Jewish religion began to receive more favorable treatment since the old-time socialist hostility to religion, which was common in the earlier Israel, might alienate many American Jews.

The turning point of the history of Israel - and of much of the rest of the Middle East came in June, 1967. Israel, in six days, defeated Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The Zionist state seized the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and most important, the old walled city of Jerusalem and the hilly country west of the Jordan River from Jordan. This hilly country contains the large towns of Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah, major locations of the current struggle.

Israel's justification was that it was fighting a preventive war to counter a military buildup by Egypt that might be a prelude for an attack on Israel. But General Mattiyahu Peled who led the Israeli offensive in the Six-Day War and Menachem Begin, the Likud leader who later became Prime Minister of Israel, have both said that this was not the case. They agree that whatever military buildup Egypt was doing was not adequate for an attack on Israel. It certainly didn't call for such a massive Israeli response.

The real reason for the Six-Day War seems to be that the USA was bogged down in the Vietnam War so Israel could seize territory it had long desired without having to worry about serious American objections. Even those in the Labor Party who were most sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians wanted larger areas along Israel's borders to make defense easier. (In one place the pre 1967 border was less than 20 miles from the Mediterranean Sea). Much of Israel's religious right wing wanted all the ancient land of Israel mentioned in the Bible - especially the old walled city of Jerusalem with all its holy sites.

The Six-Day War brought a tremendous wave of admiration among Americans for the bravery and skill of the Israeli Army. Israel gained goodwill in the USA - even though an Israeli

plane attacked an American spy ship in the Mediterranean during the Six-Day War and killed a number of American sailors.

During this period, the Palestinian movement of resistance to Israeli rule developed. The politics of the Palestinian movement at this stage resembled those of the Egyptian President Nasser - socialist and indifferent to Islam. One of the most important Palestinian leaders, George Habash, was a Christian. While some people in the Palestinian movement were sympathetic to Communist China, the pro-Soviet tendencies in the movement quickly suppressed the pro Chinese tendencies - if only because the Soviet Union was able to supply more weapons and money to support the Palestinian cause than China could.

During this time Israeli intelligence gave secret support to the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas. This was in order to create a split in the Palestinian movement. Hamas opposed such mainstream Palestinian leaders as Yasser Arafat because of their lack of commitment to Islam and their friendship with the atheistic Soviet Union.

In 1970 President Nasser of Egypt died. His successor, President Anwar Sadat, wanted to make some drastic changes in both foreign and domestic policy in Egypt, but he could not do so until he had proven himself in front of his own people and the Arab world by making an effective stand against Israel.

His justification for an attack on Israel came in the early summer of 1973. The Israeli government in partnership with private business wanted to build a resort city called Yamit on the sea coast of the Sinai Peninsula which Israel had seized from Egypt in the 1967 war.

To make room for the new city of Yamit, the Israeli government forcibly moved 10,000 Arab villagers from their homes. President Sadat of Egypt used this as his reason for war.

Sadat began his war with a surprise attack on Israeli military positions in the Sinai. This attack took place on Yom Kippur, the most solemn day in the Jewish year when even many of the most religiously indifferent Jews refrain from as much activity as possible - including military activity.

The attack took place during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan when good Muslims do not eat until after nightfall. So the Israeli troops thought they could relax their guard and take off a day for Yom Kippur, confident that the Egyptian soldiers would be too weak from fasting to do anything.

The Egyptian troops quickly pushed the Israeli troops back. The Egyptians fought surprisingly well compared to their performance in the 1967 war. But soon both armies began to run low on military supplies of all kinds. The USA supplied Israeli's needs so that the Israeli army was able to regain most of the ground it had lost. But when the Soviet Union started to resupply the Egyptian army, there was a crisis behind the scenes. The USA threatened that if the Soviet government supplied Egypt, it could lead to a Soviet American conflict - meaning World War.

So the Soviet Union backed down. It was a major defeat for Soviet influence in the Middle East.

In Israel, the Yom Kippur War was also a major defeat for the ruling Labor Party. There were accusations of incompetence about the Labor Party's management of the war. How had Israeli intelligence - the best in the world - failed to know that the Egyptian army was planning an attack?

It was alleged that Labor's negligence had caused the high casualty rate in the Israeli Army - the needless death of many soldiers who in a small country like Israel would be hard to replace.

For the first time in the history of Israel, the Labor Party lost the parliamentary elections to the right-wing Likud Party. The new Likud Party Prime Minister Menachem Begin had once been branded as a fascist and a terrorist by the Labor Party leaders.

In 1974 only a few months before President Richard Nixon resigned, he visited both Israel and Egypt. Egypt went from being a client of the Soviet Union to being a client of the USA. While Israel got more American foreign aid than any other country, Egypt now got the second largest amount of American aid.

As another reward for his new alliance with the USA, Egyptian President Sadat received an agreement made in person with Israeli Prime Minister Begin, giving Egypt back the Sinai Peninsula - except for the Gaza Strip.

Just as Israel moved to the right after the Yom Kippur War, so did Egypt. Under the socialist-minded rule of President Nasser, Egyptian businesses had been heavily taxed to support social programs to bring the great majority of Egyptians out of the desperate poverty in which they lived. Now, under President Sadat, the high taxes were cut and private businesses flourished. The social programs were also cut and the living standard of ordinary Egyptians fell. As their lives got harder, many of the poor turned to the underground Muslim fundamentalist groups. Although these groups had once received secret support from the CIA and Israeli intelligence, now they denounced President Sadat for selling out Egypt to the USA and Israel.

After settling its southern border by turning over the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, the Likud government expanded Israel's northern border and took over a large part of southern Lebanon. This was to prevent raids and artillery attacks by Palestinian guerrilla groups which had cost many lives in the Israeli border communities of Ma'alot and Kiryat Shemona. To police the Muslims of southern Lebanon, Israel armed and trained a militia of Lebanese Christians. This militia was closely connected with a fascist party called the Phalange.

Between Likud and Labor were the small religious party which could provide a swing vote in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. Religious Jews tended to be poor and Likud - followed by Labor began to offer them subsidies of various sorts and privileges. For example - students at Yeshivas - orthodox Jewish seminaries - cannot be drafted (and this is in a country where women are drafted.)

Instead of building more of the low-cost government housing that had been built inside Israel proper by the Labor government, Likud's Ministry of Housing, offered tax breaks and subsidies to Jews who wanted to move into the West Bank occupied territories or the Gaza Strip. One hope that was openly expressed was that where these Jewish settlements were clustered thick enough, the boundary of Israel proper would be expanded to include them if negotiations ever had to be done about giving up Israeli control of the West Bank.

To build these settlements, pasture lands and olive groves were taken away from Palestinian villages. Water was diverted from the villages to the settlements, leaving the Palestinians with no way to irrigate. If any Palestinian harmed settlers, Israeli troops would come and demolish houses in the village of the guilty person. The houses of the innocent as well as the guilty were destroyed and Palestinians were forbidden to build new houses. Only the settlers had that right.

The settlements were inhabited mostly by religious Jews who believed it was their sacred duty to displace the Palestinians. Even though many in the Labor Party realized that building settlements on Palestinian land was potential dynamite, the Labor Party did little to stop the settlements because it was competing with Likud for the support of the religious parties.

In 1978 the Shah of Iran, one of the closest allies of the USA, was overthrown. Because of the size and oil riches of Iran and its importance as an intelligence listening post, this was a bigger defeat for the USA than the Vietnam War. In the words of ex-President Richard Nixon, Iran and Israel had been America's "cops on the beat" in the Middle East - a phrase that gives a good idea of what much of the American leadership really thinks of the people of the Middle East.

When the ousted Shah needed cancer surgery and talked about going to a hospital in the USA, many Iranians believed the Shah's arrival in the USA would be a signal for a coup against the new fundamentalist Muslim government by the Iranian army and police - which were still controlled by officers loyal to the Shah.

A group of Iranian students seized the staff of the American Embassy and held them hostage. This brought about a wave of hostility in the USA. Not only Iranians, but also people from India, various Arab countries and Mexico were beaten up by angry Americans - anybody who looked foreign and might be one of those "terrible Iranians" that most people had barely heard of before the hostage crisis.

When Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, declared war on Iran, a common saying among Americans was "Buy Iraqi war bonds." Actually the USA played a strange double game during the Iraq-Iran war. While the administration of President Ronald Reagan gave Iraq intelligence information about Iranian troop movements and loaned millions to Iraq, the same Reagan administration also sold weapons to Iran with the help of Israel. The "special" relationship with Israel had really blossomed. The Reagan administration, by means of Israel, was able to ship weapons to Iran - a move that would have outraged many of those who voted for Reagan.

In 1982 Israel captured Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. The attack on Beirut was led by General Ariel Sharon, a strong supporter of the Likud Party. The purpose was to destroy Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization, which had its headquarters in Beirut. Arafat and his staff escaped but two Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut did not. While Beirut was in Israeli hands General Sharon allowed Lebanese militia men from the Christian Fascist Phalange group, which worked with Israel, to go into the refugee camps and massacre 2,000 Palestinian men, women and children. Photos of the heaps of bodies, which looked like a Nazi death camp, were published around the world. For the first time much of the American press was sharply critical of Israel, General Sharon was especially blamed.

Except for a handful of critics, the American Jewish community had always been either full of enthusiastic praise for Israel or silent. Then the Labor Party government which was strongly connected to Jewish liberal Democrats was replaced by Likud, a party which many American Jews found deeply disturbing. Yet most of these people tried to act as if there had been no real change until the refugee camp massacre. Then for the first time many American Jews spoke out openly against Israeli policies.

This had repercussions in the Israeli government since Israel depended heavily on the moral and financial support of American Jews. In 1984 the Likud government was replaced by a "national unity government", a cabinet composed of both Labor and Likud members.

Then came the first intifada (literally "shaking off") a Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and the Gaze Strip. The world saw Palestinian teenagers with no guns throwing rocks at Israeli troops and getting themselves killed. Many Israeli Jewish young people protested against the excesses of Israeli troops in suppressing the intifada. These young people called for their own government to obey UN Security Council resolution 242 and withdraw its troops from the West Bank and the Gaze Strip and shut down the Jewish settlements in those areas. The Israeli peace movement called for a "two state solution" with the West Bank and Gaza Strip becoming an independent Palestinian country.

Meanwhile just as the socialist, secular Labor Party had lost to the Israeli religious right, among the Palestinians the socialist, secular Palestine Liberation Organization lost influence to fundamentalist Muslim organizations like Hamas, which had been originally supported by Israeli intelligence. Groups like Hamas gained influence not only because of the guns and bombs they used against Israel, but also because of their charities like soup kitchens for the numerous Palestinian unemployed.

In 1990 in the midst of the first intifada, Yitzhak Shamir of Likud became Israeli Prime Minister. Two years later there was revealed something which had really long been known. A new generation of Israelis was shocked by a letter Shamir and other Likud leaders wrote to Adolf Hitler before World War II. In this letter Shamir and the others said their was no need for conflict between themselves at Hitler because they only wanted a "nationalist and totalitarian state for the Jewish people" just as Hitler wanted such a state for the German people. Shamir lost his job as Prime Minister.

The new Prime Minister in 1992 was Yitzhak Rabin of the Labor Party who had been Defense Minister in the 1984 "national unity" government. Rabin was the first Israeli Prime Minister who was actually born in Israel. His parents were early Zionist settlers. In many ways Rabin personified the early pioneering Zionist's spirit that helped form the Labor Party.

In June, 1945, Rabin was a 23 year old officer in the Haganah - the socialist Zionist military organization. In that month a group of Holocaust survivors tried to enter illegally into what was then British controlled Palestine. The British authorities jailed them in the port city of Acco. Rabin led a team of Haganah fighters who broke into the jail and set the Holocaust survivors free.

Rabin's rescue of the prisoners is the basis for one of the main incidents in the best selling novel Exodus by Leon Uris. The leader of the Haganah group who did the jail break was called Ari ben Canaan in Uris's novel. In the hit movie Exodus Ari ben Canaan was played by Paul Newman. Rabin always denied modestly that he could be anyone who Paul Newman played, but his action inspired a novel and a film that symbolized Israel to millions of Americans. Rabin was a major figure in building the Israeli Army. In the 1967 six-day war with Egypt he was one of the outstanding commanders on the ground with the troops.

Like many Israeli military men Rabin had a talent for being brutally frank, as opposed to the sugar-coated version Israeli public relations tried to spread in the USA. When he wrote his memoirs in 1979 he caused a sensation in Israel. He admitted that in 1948 he had personally led Haganah troops in expelling 50,000 Palestinian civilians from their homes - an action that the Israeli government had always denied.

To end the Palestinian uprising, Rabin went to the USA where he met with American President Bill Clinton and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat. Rabin recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (which until then had been considered a "terrorist group".) He turned over the administration of a number of West Bank towns and cities to a Palestinian authority with headquarters in Ramallah. To a very limited degree Rabin tried to slow down the expansion of Jewish settlements on the West Bank. Also Rabin opened diplomatic relations with Jordan and withdrew troops from Lebanon.

He ended up antagonizing Israel's religious right. One of the most militant Jewish settlements was in the middle of the Palestinian city of Hebron - a very sensitive spot because the tomb of Abraham, ancestor of both Jews and Arabs, was there. A Jewish settler went into the shrine that sheltered the tomb of Abraham and found an elderly Palestinian man who was reading aloud from the Koran, the Muslim holy book. The settler tore the Koran up.

One young man from the settlement would lead groups of Jewish teenagers through the Hebron market place while he carried a rifle. One day he thought the teenagers were being attacked and he fired and a Palestinian fired back. When the shooting ended a Jewish teenage girl, Tirza Porat, and a Palestinian teenage boy named Musa were both dead. The Israeli army tore down some Palestinian houses as a reprisal for Tirza Porat's death. A later inquest showed that the young Jewish man had fired wildly and killed both Tirza Porat and Musa (The name Musa means Moses. Ironically an orthodox Jewish youth had killed Moses.)

In 1994 one of the settlers named Baruch Goldstein went to the shrine at Abraham's tomb. He shot and killed 29 unarmed Palestinian men there. Finally Palestinian police arrived and killed Goldstein. In the Jewish settlement Goldstein's grave was made into a shrine and he was called a saint. In reprisal, the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas sent a man with a bomb strapped around him onto a bus filled with Israelis. He blew himself up, killing most of the people on the bus. This was the first Palestinian suicide bombing.

The next year, 1995, Prime Minister Rabin was at a rally for peace. Yigal Amir, a young Middle Eastern Jewish man, walked up to him and shot him. It is strange that in Israel, the most security conscious country in the world, the police and soldiers around Rabin let Amir get through with a pistol. In fact the police and soldiers almost parted their lines to let Amir get through.

Amir was a student at Bar-Ilan University, a center of religious right sentiments. Three other young men were accused of being his accomplices, but charges against them were quickly dropped.

There was no attempt to pursue the possibility of a conspiracy to kill Rabin, which might lead to others in Israel's religious right. Some religious right-wing Israelis openly said that they were glad that Rabin was dead. Any attempt to investigate a conspiracy and prosecute more people besides Yigal Amir would divide Israel bitterly in front of its enemies in the surrounding Arab states.

Thus Rabin was murdered - a man who was one of the most prominent products of the socialist Zionist tradition, a man whose deeds had been made into a symbol of Israel by the novel and movie Exodus.

Rabin's widow Leah refused to receive condolences from the Israeli government, which would not investigate her husband's murder thoroughly, for fear of antagonizing Israel's religious right. Instead Leah Rabin met with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Rabin's successor as prime minister was Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud Party. Both the Jewish religious right and the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas expressed joy. Both Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists wanted a hard-liner like Netanyahu who would make peaceful compromise impossible. Peaceful compromise would certainly mean secular democratic societies for both Israelis and Palestinians. In such societies, Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists might be reduced to irrelevance.

Netanyahu appointed as his minister of housing, General Ariel Sharon, who had presided over the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Beirut. Sharon began a program of still more expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestinian land on the West Bank.

In 1998 Ehud Barak of the Labor Party became Prime Minister. In negotiations with the Palestinian authority, Barak offered what was supposed to be a major concession - that portions of the eastern part of Jerusalem would be turned over to Palestinian control. These areas were

close to the ancient walled city with its holy places, so turning them over to the Palestinians was certain to offend the Israeli religious right.

But Barak allowed the construction of highways connecting the Jewish settlements on the West Bank. Only settlers could travel on these highways. At intersections with other roads the Israeli army set up check points to stop and examine the cars of any Palestinians going through.

The new highways fragmented the West Bank with corridors that could easily be sealed off by Israeli troops. As Palestinians and even some Israelis said, a Palestinian state under such control would be no more independent than the "Bantustans" - black tribal territories under the old white racist government of South Africa (which the Likud government of Israel had supported.)

Palestinians began to realize that nothing was going to be done to remove or even to diminish the already existing settlements. If Prime Minister Barak ever tried to do such a thing, he would lose the swing vote of the religious parties and his government would collapse.

Then Israeli intelligence assassinated a Hamas leader in a time of supposed peace. Palestinian youth began to attack Israeli police and soldiers. Barak's government did collapse. He was replaced by ex-General Ariel Sharon of Likud. In September 2000, Sharon wanted to spend the solemn day of Yom Kippur in the sanctuary area around the Mosque of Omar - the site of the Courts of the ancient Jewish temple. He got permission of the Muslim religious authorities, but no one had bothered to tell the throngs of Muslims, mostly elderly men, who gathered around the mosque to pray (it was too small to hold all of them).

Sharon showed up with large squads of Israeli police who forced the elderly Muslims to move. The rudeness of this incident turned the occasional violence into a full-fledged second intifada uprising which continues until this day. As Israelis fear for their safety, support for the Labor Party has dropped to an all-time low.

For 150 years Jews have been in the forefront of every movement for peace, freedom and social justice. The Israeli Labor Party was founded by people who were products of these movements. But to have a national home for the Jewish people to be safe from persecution, the political ancestors of Israeli Labor Party assumed that they had to have a space controlled absolutely by Jews. To have such a space, they had to discriminate against Palestinians in the same way Jews had been discriminated against. After the Holocaust, these assumptions of absolute Jewish control became even stronger. They were justified by what was regarded as political realism. Ruthless measures were justified by saying the survival of the Jewish people must be protected at all costs. There was a faint undertone which said, not only must Jews be protected from being physically killing, they must be protected from intermarriage and assimilation at all costs [EDITOR'S NOTE: a requirement of Talmudic supremacism.].

The tragedy of the Labor Party and of many American Jews who support Israel is that while holding these views of ruthless political realism they still hold the socialist and humanitarian values from which the early Zionists came. They have to make the most contorted justifications - or denial - of Israel's oppression of the Palestinians.

When Israeli Labor takes measures against the Palestinians it takes them only halfway. Labor is held back by the values that were so much a part of its early history, so it loses out to a Likud Party which is only too willing to carry oppressive measures all the way.

Ani ma'amin

(in Hebrew means "I believe".)

I believe that the solution to the Israeli/Palestinian problem will not be found in the "ruthless political realism" which Likud applies so well. The problem with this "realism" is that it is not realistic.

I believe that the solution will be found in the original socialist and humanitarian values which the Labor Party partly deserted but never completely abandoned. These values are exemplified by the Israeli reservists who have gone to prison rather than serve on the West Bank and inflict injustice on the Palestinians.

I believe we must be realistic about these values - that is, we must realize the extreme difficulty of bringing them into reality. But in the end, these values are the only alternative to the madness.

by Jodey Bateman

“QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS”

Question: Who are the rightful proprietors of Palestine?

Jodey Bateman answers:

The name Palestine comes from the Philistines, who were Greek-speaking raiders from the islands of the Aegean Sea.

They fought the Egyptians, who defeated them in 1194 BC. The Philistines settled in Gaze and in the coastal cities of Ashkelan and Ashdod, which are now part of Israel.

By 630 BC the Philistines had lost their Greek language and spoke a dialect of Hebrew, according to the few inscriptions they have left.

I am not certain how long the Philistines remained a distinct people, but the coastal area was still called Palestina (Philistine country) in the time of the Roman Empire. After the Romans crushed the Jewish uprising of AD 66 to AD 70, they united the provinces of Judea and Galilee (which were both predominately Jewish) with the province of Samaria. The new combined

administrative unit was called Palestina. The name survived as a province under the rule of the Muslim Caliphs of Damascus and Baghdad.

Samaria was the territory of the ancient kingdom of Israel. The people of Samaria were called Samaritans. They were often in conflict with the Jews. Both peoples considered themselves to be “children of Israel” – descendants of an ancient chieftain named Jacob or Israel.

Shortly after 1600 AD all but a few hundred Samaritans converted to Islam. The West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin were originally Samaritan towns. Many Palestinians are of Samaritan origin. Thus the origins of the Palestinian people are mixed. Many of their ancestors were Jews who converted to Christianity. The Palestinian city of Ramallah is still predominately Christian. After centuries of Muslim rule, most Palestinians became Muslims by AD 1300, the end of the Crusader period.

Also the Palestinians are descended from Greeks, Arabs and everyone else who settled in that part of the world. But they are probably just as much descended from the peoples of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah as the Israelis are.

The Israelis are also a mixed people with ancestors from all the peoples of the Middle East and Europe that the Jews settled among.

After World War I all the Arabic speaking people who had been part of the Turkish Empire tried to unite as one country. At that time there was no talk of a specifically Palestinian nationalism. The idea of an “Arab Nation” is an artificial construct based on language. But the Arabic speaking people of the Middle East do not have a common origin. It’s just like the people of Chile, Argentina and Peru are not all Spaniards because they speak Spanish. They are not all descended from a little group of conquerors who came from Spain in the 16th century. In the same way the Arabic speaking people are not all descended from the relatively few warriors who came out of the Arabian desert to conquer the Middle East for Islam in the seventh century AD.

For that matter, the Jews are not all descended from a band of freed slaves who came with Moses out of Egypt.

Palestinian nationalism was created by the pressure of the Zionists on the mixed people of that ancient country. The harder the pressure has become, the more it has welded the mixed Palestinians into a solid mass with stronger national feelings than ever.

If the pressure is relaxed, will the Palestinians and the Israelis both begin to lose their cohesion? Will some Israelis and some Palestinians begin to unite as one people?

FOUR THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY

in 4,200 words

by Jodey Bateman

(The story told here is not the one told in the official versions of Judaism, Christianity or Islam, but it seems to fit the evidence of such sciences as *archeology* and *genetics*.)

Around 2000 BC there was an environmental collapse in the area where the borders of the present-day countries of Turkey, Syria and Iraq meet one another. There had been erosion from deforestation, loss of topsoil from overgrazing and too much land being plowed up and the soil turned too salty to cultivate from too much irrigation. To escape starvation, the people from this region moved into the lands of their neighbors - southern Iraq and the present-day countries of Lebanon, Israel and Jordan. Some of them moved as far south as Egypt.

The natives of the lands where they moved were not too happy to welcome the newcomers to share their scarce resources. The locals tried to restrict the movements of the newcomers. In the summers, they were allowed to let their sheep and goats graze on the high, rocky hill pastures that the locals didn't want, but in the winters they brought their flocks down into the sheltered valleys - to endless complications about grazing permits. Between the great civilizations of what are now Iraq and Egypt there were many small kingdoms and the newcomers had further complications when they tried to move their flocks from the lands of one small local ruler to another which needed still more permits. In the present day southeastern Europe there are people called Vlachs who try to move their sheep and goats around settled areas with the same sort of complications about getting official permits. These ancient Middle Eastern newcomers were called Hebrews by the locals - a word that means Boundary Crossers.

One of the most powerful of the Hebrew Chieftains was a man called Abraham who is said to have had 319 men in his tribe capable of fighting with bow and arrow. But there were many other groups which were called Hebrews. The families of their chiefs intermarried with one another and the members of a tribe saw themselves as all being descendants of a powerful chief of the past. For these reasons, the tribes and clans and sub-clans told the stories of their origins and their relationships to one another and their attitudes to one another in terms of family dramas of the sort you can find in the book of Genesis.

A person was seen less as an individual than as a member of a tribe or an extended family and whatever the group had done in the past, the present individual member of the group was seen as having done. This is a common attitude in the Middle East.

One group of Hebrews who had gotten grazing permits in Egypt near the northeastern boundary of that country was later drafted by the king of Egypt to do forced construction labor. Then there was another period of environmental collapse around the whole eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. There was a wave of famines and epidemics in many places, including Egypt. When the control of the Egyptian government grew weak because of the crisis, the Hebrew forced laborers left Egypt under the leadership of a prophet called Moses.

This particular group of Hebrews were supposedly descended from the powerful Abraham. They were called the children of Israel after the name of one of Abraham's grandsons. However, Egyptian inscriptions mention that a people called Israel were already living in the north central part of the country now called Israel before Moses led his people out of Egypt. The likelihood is that all of the children of Israel had not been in Egypt.

In the family drama way in which Genesis explained origins, the ancestor Israel was said to have two wives who were sisters. Levi, the tribe Moses belonged to, was descended from a man of that name who was the son of the older sister. The sons and stepsons of the younger sister were said to be the tribes who lived in the area where Egyptian inscriptions placed a people called Israel before Moses led his people from Egypt.

But Aaron, the older brother of Moses, became the founder of a clan of hereditary priests called Kohenim. They alone had the right to perform sacrifices. Moses and other elders of the tribe of Levi were the ancestors of clans of Levites - hereditary temple servants.

The environmental collapse had weakened the power of the small kingdoms. In some places they were so weak that the Hebrews came down from their highland pastures and massacred their former rulers in the valleys and took over their farm lands. The tribes who came with Moses invaded the land now called Israel and tried to take over the land for themselves by the same process of conquest and massacre. But in many places the old local peoples were too strong and could not be killed off or driven away. In the words of the Book of Judges "So the Israelites lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites and they took their daughters as wives for themselves and their own daughters they gave to their sons and they worshipped their gods."

But not completely - the priests and the Levites scattered out among the tribes. They were not allowed to own farm land of their own except for small pieces of pasture land. They depended upon the offerings that worshippers brought to their shrines. They preached a new supreme God - whose name cannot be spoken by present-day orthodox Jews, although it seems to have been used freely in those days.

Sometimes this God was seen as a ruler over the other gods and goddesses like Zeus was over the Greek gods. Other times - and especially later - he was seen as the only God. Always no god was to get greater worship than he did.

The priests and the Levites said that all the people in the land - Israelites who had come from Egypt, Israelites who had never been in Egypt, Hebrews with little or no connection to the Israelites and the old local peoples like the Canaanites - should all see themselves as one people with one history who had all come out of Egypt and who were all bound by a covenant with the supreme God - as much as if they had been personally present when Moses proclaimed it.

Finally the tribes were able to unite into a kingdom - which lasted through four kings before it split into two kingdoms. The northern one was called Israel. The southern one was called Judah - after the name of its largest tribe. They were supposedly descended from a man named Judah.

Judah was supposed to be the son of the older sister who was a wife of the ancestor Israel - just like Levi, the ancestor of the priests and the Levites (who included Moses). The name Judah is the origin of the word Jew.

In 721 BC the northern kingdom, Israel, lost its independence to the Assyrian Empire which was centered in what is now northern Iraq. The king of Assyria took into exile 27,290 people from the kingdom of Israel into what is now northeastern Syria. The tribes of the northern kingdom have been called "The lost tribes of Israel" but it is obvious that the Assyrians left the great majority of them in their own country. Their capital city was called Samaria. Though they never regained their independence, they came to be called Samaritans after their former capital.

The Babylonian Empire, centered further south in Iraq, destroyed the Assyrian Empire. Then in 605 BC the Babylonians invaded the southern kingdom of Judah. They took 10,000 people into exile including the king and set a puppet king up in his place. In 586 BC the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and took 5,000 more people into exile.

The Babylonians ended the independence of the Kingdom of Judah completely. But still, only 15,000 people in all had been taken into exile in what is now Iraq. The great majority of the people remained in Judah - which is the southern part of the present country of Israel, especially Jerusalem and the area around it.

Then in 538 BC, Cyrus, the emperor of Persia (now Iran) conquered Babylonia (now Iraq) and a great deal of the rest of the middle east. To pacify the many nationalities he ruled, he showed great care in restoring destroyed or abandoned temples. He allowed some exiles of Judah to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Apparently they co-operated well with the people who had remained in Judah in rebuilding the temple. Meanwhile, many of the exiles did not go back. They remained in what is now Iraq.

(This is around the time of the birth of Buddha)

Then about 100 years later, around 440 BC, a new group of descendants of the exiles came to Jerusalem from Babylonia (which is now Iraq). They were led by a priest named Ezra, a direct descendant through the high priests from Aaron, older brother of Moses. Ezra brought with him a written collection of all the traditions of the priests which he and his assistants had edited. This collection is now the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

He and his successors tried to strictly enforce their own control of the temple and exclude those they thought were impure. They persuaded or forced men of Judah who had married wives not from Judah to divorce their wives.

Among those they excluded from the temple as impure were the descendants of the northern tribes (who were now called Samaritans). The Samaritans set up their own temple on a mountain near the present town of Nablus.

Ezra was a contemporary of Socrates.

In 333 BC, Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, who had become ruler over all Greece, conquered the Persian Empire. Jerusalem and Judah surrendered to him without a fight. Alexander had no children, so he divided his empire among his generals on his deathbed. The first Judah belonged to the descendants of Ptolemy, the general who had been awarded Egypt. But then Judah was taken over by a descendant of Seleucus, the general who had been given Syria. This descendant was named Antiochus Epiphanes. He decided to promote unity throughout his kingdom by having a new national god who would be worshipped in all temples along with the other gods.

Many important priests in Judah were willing to go along with this and allow the national god's image to be introduced into the temple in Jerusalem. These priests thought of their own god as simply a chief of all gods, like Zeus was among the Greeks.

But a village priest named Mattathias led an uprising against what he regarded as blasphemy. His sons carried on the uprising after his death. They became known as the Maccabees.

In 165 BC the Maccabees recaptured the temple in Jerusalem and abolished the worship of the national god of Antiochus. The Maccabees spread out beyond the boundaries of Judah and captured the land of the northern tribes, or Samaritans. The extreme northern tribes in the area called Galilee "became Jews" - that is, they were accepted into the temple in Jerusalem as worshippers and rejected the Samaritan temple, which still continued as a place of worship.

The Maccabees conquered the Edomites or Idumeans, a Hebrew people who lived to the south of Judah and were considered closely related to the people of Judah. These people also "became Jews" - that is, they were allowed to worship in the temple in Jerusalem.

In a similar fashion over the centuries many peoples have been incorporated into the Jews - and many others have dropped out.

The Maccabee rulers used the Greek title "ethnarch" - meaning "ruler of the nation". When the Maccabee Alexander Jannaeus tried to declare himself king there was a civil war.

Many of the poorer people felt that the title of king implied a sacred power - and that one

who claimed that title might try to take away the power the people had won in the struggle against Antiochus. For instance, the king might try to replace village councils with royal officials or confiscate village lands. Many of the common people believed that only a descendant of King David (who had lived 900 years before) could be king and that somewhere was hidden a true king, a descendant of David, who they called Messiah, meaning the anointed one. The word Messiah in Greek is Christos. They believed that some day the Messiah would appear and set up "The kingdom of Heaven" - the totally just and happy society.

Those who supported the right of the Maccabees to be kings were called Sadducees from the Hebrew word for legitimate - meaning a Macabee could be a legitimate king.

There was another civil war for power between the sons of Alexander Jannaeus. The Romans intervened on the side of one of the sons, named Hyrcanus. After the death of Hyrcanus, the Romans proclaimed his son-in-law Herod to be the king. Judah was now a subject kingdom in the Roman Empire.

Herod was so unpopular that the Romans would not allow his sons to succeed him. But the Roman governors who ruled Judah were even more unpopular. In AD 66 the Roman governor Florus tried to confiscate money from the temple treasury. This money was supposed to buy grain every seventh year when the Jews were forbidden to grow grain and also to buy emergency supplies in famine years. There was a major uprising that lasted for 4 years until the Romans captured Jerusalem in AD 70 and destroyed the temple. There was great loss of life and many thousands of survivors were sold abroad as slaves (many of these were ransomed by Jewish communities which already existed in many parts of the Roman Empire).

Yet still most of the people of Judah and Galilee remained in their own homeland and continued to consider themselves Jews. In between them, the Samaritans remained (although the Samaritan temple was closed by the Romans).

By this time the people of Galilee and the Samaritans no longer spoke the Hebrew language in daily life. They spoke Aramaic, a language closely related to Hebrew which was also the main language in the areas now known as Syria and Iraq.

The Hebrew language survived as a spoken language in Jerusalem and the towns around it at least until the destruction of the temple. In the areas south of Jerusalem many Jews spoke Arabic, which is related to Hebrew and Aramaic. In much of the rest of the Roman Empire many people were converted to Judaism. The usual language of most of these Jewish communities was Greek, which was the main language of administration, business records and literature in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Many of these Jewish communities had been in existence long before the destruction of the temple. Jews (often descendants of converts to Judaism) were especially numerous in what is now Egypt, Syria and Turkey. There was even a Jewish community in Rome. Most of the early Christian community in Rome (including the first 30 or so popes) were Jews.

In 130 AD there was another Jewish uprising when the Roman Emperor Hadrian tried to forbid the practice of circumcision. After the uprising was crushed, Jews were forbidden to live in Jerusalem. They could only enter Jerusalem by paying for permission once a year to weep at the part of the wall which was still standing which had once enclosed the temple. But they were once again allowed to practice circumcision.

The center of Jewish life shifted northward to the city of Tiberias in Galilee where the Jews were ruled by a Patriarch who exercised much of the authority of a king. The authority was limited, of course, by the Roman Emperor and also by the authority of the Talmud - the huge commentary of the Jewish law which the rabbis of Tiberias prepared between AD 200 and AD

400.

This was also the period of the rise of Christianity. Until about AD 200 most Christians were Jews - although many early Christians were non-Jews who had already adopted such Jewish customs as not working on Saturday. Christian churches, unlike Jewish synagogues, allowed the males to join as full members without having to be circumcised (Incidentally, until 368 AD Christians observed Saturday as a day of rest like the Jews.)

After 200 AD the Roman Empire suffered an environmental collapse - epidemics, famines and constant civil wars in which rival candidates from emperor fought for power and for the scarce resources. Many pagans became Christians during these difficult times, believing that the end of the world was near and also wanting the charity which the Christian churches gave out to the poor.

In 312 AD the emperor Constantine made Christianity legal. Immediately there was a bitter feud between Christians of Jewish origin, led by Arvus and Christians of pagan origin led by Athanasius. The issue was the nature of Jesus. The followers of Arius believed Jesus was the Messiah or Christ, greater than any other created being, but still created by God and subordinate to God. The followers of Athanasius believed that Jesus was God the Son, sharing the same nature as God the Father.

By the reign of the emperor Theodosius, about 390 AD, the followers of Athanasius had won. But Jewish Christians, who were still the majority in places like Syria, still opposed the idea that Jesus was God.

Shortly after 400 AD, Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople (Now Istanbul, Turkey) came up with a compromise that he thought might be acceptable to Christians of Jewish origin - that Jesus was not born god - he became god when the Holy Spirit descended upon him at his baptism.

But a council of bishops meeting at Ephesus in what is now western Turkey, condemned the idea of Nestorius. They ruled that Jesus was God from the moment he appeared in Mary's womb.

This made Mary "theotokos" (the God-bearer, sometimes translated "Mother of God"). It made Mary worthy of hyperdulia (supreme devotion) but not of latria (worship). The crowds in front of the bishops' council chanted "Divine! Divine! Of course she's divine!"

The Nestorian Christians, who included most of those of Jewish origin could not accept this and were excommunicated.

Then around our year 615 AD Mohammad had his first revelation near what is now Mecca. Saudi Arabia, Jews had lived in Arabia for hundreds of years. Whole Arab tribes had become Jews. Others had become Christians of the orthodox sort, accepting Jesus as God and Mary as the God-bearer. Many Arabs had gone through the stage of being Jews and becoming Nestorian Christians. Muhammad himself was a Hanifi. A Hanifi was a member of a movement which believed in one God which had existed among the Arabs for hundreds of years. Muhammad fought a civil war against his own city, Mecca, which was the center of idol worship among the Arabs. When he won, he agreed to spare the lives of his enemies if they would let him smash all the idols - which he did.

Most of those Arabs who were Jews would not accept Muhammad. Neither would most of those who were Christians who accepted Jesus as God and Mary as God-bearer. But the Nestorians rallied around Muhammad. His successors conquered the Middle East, including most of the eastern Roman Empire within less than 100 years after his death. The Nestorians welcomed them as liberators. Most Nestorians converted to Islam within about 200 years more -

that is by about 900 AD although some have stayed a separate Christian denomination until this day.

Muslim rulers ordered their pagan subjects to renounce their idols and become Muslims. However they did not force Jews or Christians to become Muslims. They did put an extra tax on Jews and Christians which gave them a powerful incentive to become Muslims.

During the period of the Crusades (1100 AD to 1250 AD) many middle eastern Jews and Christians rallied to the side of Muslim rulers against the invading western European Christians. But because of the long bitter war, there was less tolerance and increased pressure on Jews and Christians to become Muslims - as many did. With the growth of Islam came the spread of the Arabic language. In Jerusalem, Jews and Christians still spoke Aramaic, not Arabic until the 1300's.

In Egypt, Christians still spoke the ancient Egyptian language until the 1500's. Aramaic was a common language in rural Syria until the 1600's and even today there is a Christian village in Syria called Malura where the people still speak Aramaic. Older Jews and Christians from Iraq still speak Aramaic.

In much of the Muslim world where Arabic is the official language, many Muslims speak other languages - for example, the Kurds of northern Iraq and eastern Syria speak their own language and there are several languages of the Berber group still spoken by Muslims in Algeria and Morocco although Arabic is the official language of those countries.

From about 1450 on, most of the Arabic speaking world was under the domination of the Turkish Empire. In the late 1800's came the rise of Arab Nationalism. The Arabic language became an emotional symbol of the unity of subject people in the Turkish Empire against their Turkish overlords. People began to think of themselves as one Arab nation. Along the more westernized this unity included Christian Arabs as well as Muslims.

Up until the late 1800's most Middle Eastern people used the word "Arab" to mean only a nomad - or maybe they would say "town Arab" for someone from an urban area of what is now Saudi Arabia. But most Middle Eastern people were not nomads. The Arab Nationalist movement taught them to use the word "Arab" for themselves as a symbol of unity against the Turks. Now the word "Arab" seems to mean anyone who speaks the Arabic language.

There is a parallel and a contrast with Latin America. A handful of Spaniards conquered Latin America and people adopted the Spanish language. But it is obvious from looking at people in countries like Mexico, Peru, or the Dominican Republic that the majority of them are not descended from European Spaniards. They would not call themselves Spaniards just because they spoke Spanish.

But this is exactly what Middle Eastern people have done with the word "Arab". And the rise of Arab Nationalism coincided with the rise of Zionism in the 1890's led by the Austrian Jew Theodore Herzl.

Let it be said of Theodor Herzl that he did not want to be as brutal to the Palestinian population as the US was to the American Indians while he was growing up. But he was a white European who felt that his civilization had a right to push other people around. He hoped to buy the Palestinians all railroad tickets out of Palestine. It probably wouldn't make any difference to him if he had known that a considerable number of Palestinians were descendants of the Samaritans - the old northern tribes of Israel (In the 1600's the old Samaritan high priestly line died out. When some Samaritans chose a successor from a lesser priestly clan, the majority of Samaritans would not accept him and converted to Islam. Their descendants are a high proportion of the "West Bank" Palestinians, while only a few hundred still consider themselves

Samaritans.)

The early Zionists forbade going into business with Palestinians or admitting them into their labor union federation. Zionists went to wealthy Palestinian landlords and bought land from them - then evicted the tenant farmers to have land for Zionist co-op farms. The Jewish religion cannot be blamed for this, since very few of the early Zionists practiced the Jewish religion.

After Britain defeated Turkey in World War I and took over Palestine a three-cornered fight between the Zionists, the Palestinians and the British became more and more hysterical until the establishment of the State of Israel.

Shortly before the state of Israel was established in 1948 there was a wholesale massacre of Palestinian villagers at the village of Deir Yassin. It was led by the "Irgun" a right-wing group which the Zionist establishment considered a rogue group. The Zionist leadership denounced the massacre, but it was to their advantage because thousands of Palestinian families fled in panic. The state of Israel was able to confiscate their land. Many of these Palestinians have lived in refugee camps for 50 years since with a younger generation growing up in bitterness in the shabby camps, in a feeling of constant uselessness brought about by unemployment.

These are the youth who join the fanatical Muslim fundamentalist organizations. Something must be found to give them a sense of usefulness and purpose that is not destructive.

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